IMPACT OF SUPERHERO CARTOON HEROES ON THE BEHAVIOR OF SCHOOL GOING MALE CHILDREN: A SURVEY

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ABSTRACT

The paper examines the impact of Superhero cartoons such as Bheem, Little Singham and Vir on school going children in India. Children lack perceptual defence to mass media messages, unlike the adults. They learn to speak, to dress, to eat and to behave from these cartoon characters. Online survey has been conducted on 66 respondents to gather data. Percentages and Central tendencies of data have been calculated for data analysis. For detailed study an expert named Kiran Gupta has been interviewed. The both results show cartoons play an important role in school children's life.

Keywords: Culture, Social Media, Mean, Median, Mode, Cartoon, Interview, Children,

Introduction

Technological developments brought many significant changes in cultures. The developments in computer technology, which started in the 1970s, provided significant advances after the 1980s, and the virtual rotation was obviously realized as the internet began to be used in the 90s. With the Millennium, after 2000, people started the digital era. Taylor (1871), defined culture as 'a complex whole, which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by individuals as members of a society' (P 1). Sociologists and communication have shown various ways culture has shaped the way we communicate with others (Frith & Mueller, 2010, P 16). Hall (1976) described that a man's identity provided by his/her culture. This culture is a total communication framework including words, actions, postures, gestures, tone of voice, and facial expressions.

Statement of the Problem

The present study aims at studying the way 'Super Hero Cartoon Characters have affected the behaviour of school going children.'

Objectives of the study

- To find out the favourite cartoon hero among school children.

- To find out the amount of time spend by the children watching cartoons.

- To find out whether these cartoons are having some psychological impact on children or not.

- To search out whether children's behaviour changes due to watching cartoons or not.

Hypotheses

H1: Children and Preteens are more affected by cartoon characters in comparison to teenagers.

H2: Males children are more affected by cartoon characters in comparison to females.

H3: Indian cartoon heroes are more popular to Indian children.

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H4: Children spend more time in watching cartoons.

H5: Cartoons create some psychological impact on children.

H6: Cartoons change the behaviour of children.

H7: Children imitate the actions or dialogues of cartoon heroes.

H8: Children involve in fight with others after watching these cartoon heroes

H9: Children spend more time watching cartoons rather than involving in outdoor physical activities.

H10: Superhero cartoons make male children violent.

Research Methodology

Different methods of Survey such as Questionnaire and Expert Interview have been used in this study. Questionnaires provide quantitative data for analysis (Figure 2). For qualitative data, an expert named Mrs Kiran Gupta (M.A. Psychology) has been interviewed.

Sample Design

Population: The population for this research included the Children themselves, Parents, Relatives, Family Friends, and Teachers using Facebook (Table 1).

Sampling Techniques: In this research, random sampling technique was used for necessary data collection. About 200 profiles on researcher's Facebook friend list have been randomly contacted. The each respondent was systematically chosen alphabetically.

Sample Size: Out of 200 respondents, only 66 respondents filled the online survey. So the sample size was 66 individual respondents.

Data Collection Survey has been through Google Online survey forms. The survey questionnaire includes 12 closed-ended questions. The expert has been contacted personally. A different questionnaire with 19 questions with both open and closed-ended questions has been created. Likert Rating Scales have been used to measure attitudes of the respondents directly.

Data Analysis & Presentation

Google Online survey forms automatically calculate the percentage of the responses. For further analysis, central tendencies (Mean, Median and Mode) have been calculated.

Table 1: Demographic factor of respondents

Demographics	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Child Himself/herself	4	6.1
Parents	37	56.1
Family Friend	3	4.5
Relative	11	16.7
Teacher	11	16.7

For the collection Age data, the age group has been categorised into 6 groups. The last group comprised of age 16-17 as children after that mostly get admitted to Colleges.

Table 2: Mean of Age

Age in Years	Number of Respondents f_i (Frequency)	Mid-point (x_i)	$f_i * x_i$
1-3	8	2	8*2
4-6	14	5	14*5
7-9	19	8	19*8

10-12	7	11	7*11
13-15	11	14	11*14
16-17	7	16.5	7*16.5
	Total = 66		Total = 584.5
Mean = 584.5/66= 8.856			

Survey Findings

1. What is your relation with the child?

56.1% of respondents are parents. The mode of the respondent is Parents. So, the data yielded from them tends to be free from any Population Specification error. Parents know their children more than any other individuals.

2. Gender

Out of 66 responses, 48 responses (72.7%) are about Males whereas 18 (27.3%) are about females. Gender Mode is Male. As the survey is a comparative study about the impact of cartoon heroes on school going male children and female children, the data yielded largely about male children.

3. Age

There are 19 children is 7 to 9 years while 14 children are of 4 to 6 years. Majority of the responses received are about Children and Preteens. Mean of age = 8.856 (Table 2). The Mid-point (N/2) = 33, which falls in 23-41 of Cumulative Median. Median = 7-9 years. Both Mean and Median supports the age group 7 to 9 years. So, H1 is selected.

4. Which is your/your child's favourite cartoon hero?

47% of respondents have chosen Chota Bheem/Super Bheem. The study reveals Indian children mostly prefer Indian cartoon characters. The mode of favourite cartoon hero is Bheem. So, H3 is selected.

5. How much time do you/your child spend on watching cartoons in a day?

36.4% of respondents (24) spend 1 to 2 hours per day watching cartoons. Median is 1-2 hours. Both Median and percentage supports the same time range. So, H4 is selected.

6. These cartoon heroes create some psychological impact on the children.

23 respondents (34.8%) somewhat agreed that cartoon heroes create some psychological impact on children. Median = Somewhat Agreed. Both Median and percentage supports the same option. So, H5 is selected.

7. Children's behaviour changes after watching cartoon heroes.

20 respondents (30.3%) somewhat agreed that children's behaviour changes after watching cartoons. Median = Somewhat Agreed. Both Median and percentage supports the same option. So, H6 is selected.

8. Children imitate the actions or dialogues of the cartoon heroes.

38 respondents (57.6%) agreed children imitate actions or dialogues of their favourite cartoon heroes. Median = Agreed. Both Median and percentage supports the same option. So, H7 is selected.

9. Have you ever involved or your child ever involved in fighting with other person after watching these heroes?

32 respondents (48.5%) answered children never involve in fighting after watching cartoons. Median = Rarely. As Median contradicts the percentage, so another Mode is calculated. Mode =32. Both Mode and percentage support that children never get involved in fighting. So, H8 is not selected and Null hypothesis (H0: Children do not involve in fight with others after watching these cartoon heroes) is failed to be rejected.

10. Children spend more time watching television, mobile or tab rather than involving in outdoor physical activities.

34.8% of respondents (23) agreed that children spend more time watching television,

mobile or tab rather than involving in outdoor physical activities. Median = Agree Both Median and percentage supports the same option. So, H9 is selected.

11. Male Children are becoming more violent after watching these Superhero cartoons.

34.8% of respondents (23) agreed that male children are becoming more violent after watching these Superhero cartoons. Median = Somewhat Agree. As Median contradicts the percentage, so Mode is calculated. Mode =Agree. Both Mode and percentage support that male children are becoming more violent after watching these cartoons. So, H10 is selected.

12. Female Children are not affected by the action scenes shown in these superhero cartoons.

25.8% of respondents (17) agreed that female children are not affected by the action scenes, whereas 16 respondents (24.2%) disagree and think female children are affected by these cartoon characters. 11 respondents neither agree or disagree with the statement. Median = Neither Agree or Disagree. As Median contradicts the percentage, so Mode is calculated. Mode =Agree. Both Mode and percentage support that female children are less affected by the action scenes in comparison to males. So, H2 is selected.

Interview Findings

Mrs Gupta, the former Camp Counsellor at Kendriya Vidyalaya, has an experience of 5 to 6 years in child psychology. She is also a mother of female child (age group 10-12 years), who likes Chota Bheem and spend less than 1 hour watching cartoons in a day. Mrs Gupta feels cartoon heroes are portraying powerful magical and impressive impact on school going children. She agrees that Children's behaviour changes after watching cartoon heroes as the immature minds symbolize the character and perceive them to be real. They stimulate their behaviour and also confuse fiction to reality. Though she never faced any such case during her counselling career, she agrees children imitate the actions or dialogues of the cartoon heroes. Though, her daughter never gets involve in fighting after watching cartoon.

Mrs Gupta agrees that children spend more time watching cartoons rather than involving in outdoor physical activities because cartoons on mobile are easily accessible and appear to be more interesting. Children can enjoy cartoons as per their suitability. She agrees that male children become violent to some extent after watching cartoons. Children identify themselves with their superheroes and imitate the same in real life. She thinks few female children are affected depending on the situation. Cartoon heroes create a negative impact on children's mind depending on the content of the program. Children have a tendency to copy whatever they watch. They learn from their environment and can't judge positive or negative.

Conclusions

Unlike the parents who are basically the grownups of 80s and 90s, children today can watch their favourite cartoons at any time. The study has revealed children like Indian cartoon characters like Bheem, Vir, and Little Singham than BenTen. The *Desi* (Native) outlook of the characters grabs children's attention. Male children are more affected by the cartoons in comparison to females. These characters create psychological impact on male school goers. Dialogues such as *Aata Majhi Satakli* (control over anger is slipped out!) and angry posture like fierce *singham* (lion) are imitated by the children. They also imitate the gestures, dresses of their favourite superheroes (Figure 1). Children's behaviour also changes due to cartoons.

Super hero cartoons have less affect on female school children as these characters are mainly male Superhero and they couldn't relate

with them. Depiction of self hygiene by Bheem in the hand wash advertisement encourages children to wash hands before having food; similarly eating *Ladoos* for Bheem Super power also encourages them to be 'sweet tooth'. Children also refuse to cut their nails imitating the Panja (claw) attack of Little Singham. So, Content writers and producers of cartoons have to be more aware and careful as their content affect children both positively and negatively. According to Gupta, parents can deal with such negative impact by limiting the exposure to the media especially the violent characters. Parents can talk to children and help them in choosing their right role models.

Appendix

Figure 1: A kindergarten school boy imitating the police officer character and the 'Panja Attack' of Little Singham.
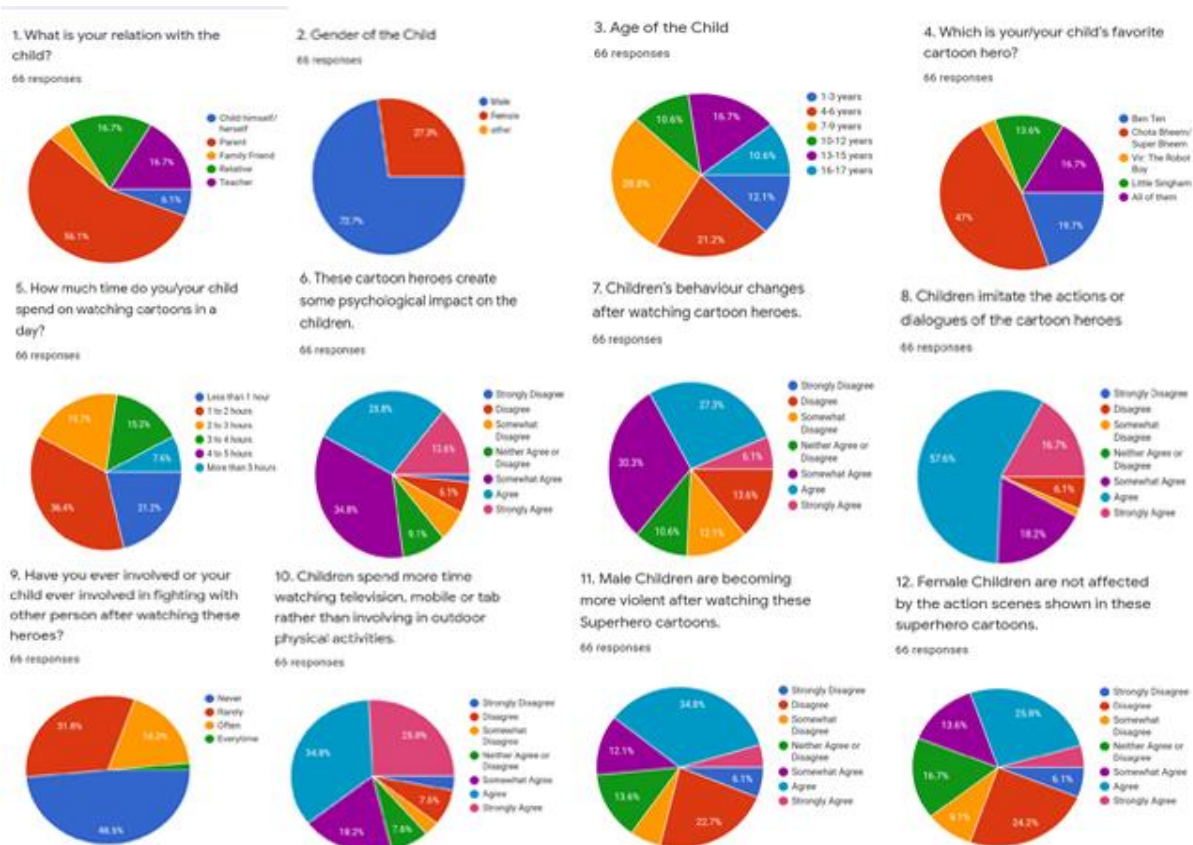

Figure 2: Result of the Questionnaire in Chart

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